"Now that the stimulus money is out in communities, I can hit the ground running as we continue to see North Carolina through these hard times," said Etheridge. "I look forward to seeing the improvements in our infrastructure and maximizing our opportunities with state and local governments, small businesses and nonprofits."

Etheridge, 69, began his political career as a Harnett County commissioner. He was then elected to the NC House of Representatives in 1978. While he was there, he was a strong supporter of educational issues and then served two terms as the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction. After that, Etheridge ran for and was elected to represent North Carolina's 2nd Congressional District in 1997 where he served until 2011. Etheridge and his wife Faye have three children and seven grandchildren.